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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 005567

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER PHUM KJUS](#) [PGOV CO AUC](#)

SUBJECT: DON BERNA'S BLOCS BEGIN DEMOBILIZING

REF: BOGOTA 5310

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Milton K. Drucker for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: Following senior AUC commanders "Don Berna," Vicente Castano, and "Javier Montanez" agreement to demobilize at least six blocs, the GOC has been preparing by streamlining the concentration and demobilization process and reaching out to local officials in areas where the blocs dominate. Don Berna's Heroes de Tolova will begin concentrating on June 10 and officially demobilize five to seven days later. During the process, all relevant agencies, including the National Registrar, Department of Administrative Security, Prosecutor General's Office, and OAS, will be present to identify, register, and document the demobilized. Interagency coordination has improved, although the Prosecutor General's Office is still not fully engaged. End summary.

Demobilization Starting

12. (C) Upon turning himself into authorities, Don Berna agreed to demobilize all the blocs under his control (reftel). Estimates vary as to how many men Berna controls, but several knowledgeable contacts, including independent security analyst Alfredo Rangel, believe he is responsible for up to 4,000. Vicente Castano and Javier Montanez also agreed to demobilize their troops. Estimates of their paramilitaries are less reliable, but could be as high as 6,000 or 7,000.

13. (C) The first bloc scheduled to demobilize is Don Berna's Heroes de Tolova, which has 400 paramilitaries and is powerful in southern Cordoba and northern Choco Departments. The GOC will begin concentrating the bloc on June 10 in a specially designated area in the rural district of "Altos de Rusia," Cordoba. Don Berna's Heroes de Granada will probably be next. The bloc has an estimated 2,300 members, according to the OAS verification mission, and dominates Medellin and the surrounding municipalities in the Aburre Valley. The GOC is working to find a suitable concentration zone in a rural area outside Medellin. The other blocs committed to demobilizing include:

-- Pacific Bloc: controlled by Don Berna; operates on the coast of Cauca and Valle del Cauca Departments.

-- Self Defense Forces of Meta and Vichada: controlled by Javier Montanez; operates in the eastern plains.

-- Liberators of the South: controlled by Javier Montanez; operates on the Pacific coast.

-- Centauros Bloc: under the control of various mid level commanders but Vicente Castano will be responsible for demobilization; operates in the eastern plains.

Streamlining The Process

14. (C) The GOC has revised the concentration and demobilization process to make it more efficient. The first phase will be five to seven days of concentration in a small, specially designated area. The GOC will cross check the list of demobilizing bloc members with the Department of Administrative Security (DAS, rough FBI equivalent) and the National Registrar's Office to confirm the identities of as many as possible.

15. (C) Next, a maximum five-day registration period will begin. The bloc will be divided into groups of 100. Each group will go through a full day of registration, including receiving a reinsertion identity card that has name, date of birth, fingerprint, and photo; taking a demographic survey; being issued/reissued a national identity card by the Registrar; a briefing on reinsertion benefits and obligations; at least two psychological counseling sessions; and a check-in with the OAS verification mission. The Prosecutor General's Office (Fiscalia) is also supposed to be present to begin verifying that the demobilized are not guilty of any major crimes and are eligible for pardon under Law 782.

16. (C) Peace Commissioner Restrepo has said no more than 500 paramilitaries can concentrate and demobilize at one time, meaning large blocs such as the Heroes de Granada will have to demobilize in several stages. Following registration, the demobilized will leave the concentration zone, return home, and report to the nearest Reference and Orientation Center (CRO), where they will enroll in the Ministry of Interior and Justice's reinsertion programs and continue the pardon process with the Fiscalía.

Cooperation Improving

17. (C) Coordination among the government agencies involved in demobilization has improved. Confusion and competition between the Peace Commissioner's Office and Ministry of Interior and Justice over control of reinsertion has decreased. The Ministry manages the CROs. However, Fiscalía staff continue to complain that the Uribe administration has not informed them of when or where the demobilizations will be. The Peace Commissioner and Justice and Interior Ministry staff, meanwhile, have complained that the Fiscalía has shown little interest in participating. We continue to urge both the Fiscalía and other agencies involved in demobilization to coordinate the important debriefing and pardon process.

18. (C) The Peace Commissioner's Office has been reaching out to local government officials in areas where demobilizations are planned to explain and get local support for the reinsertion process. Restrepo and his staff presented the revised concentration and demobilization program to local officials in Medellin and plan to do the same in numerous other cities in the coming weeks.

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